United Nations CCPR/C/SLV/CO/7

International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

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Human Rights Committee

Concluding observations on the seventh periodic report of El Salvador*

1. The Committee considered the seventh periodic report of El Salvador (CCPR/C/SLV/7) at its 3456th and 3457th meetings (see CCPR/C/SR.3456 and 3457), held on 13 and 14 March 2018. At its 3478th and 3479th meetings (CCPR/C/SR.3478 and 3479), held on 28 and 29 March 2018, the Committee adopted the present concluding observations.

A. Introduction

2. The Committee is grateful to the State party for having accepted the simplified reporting procedure and for submitting its seventh periodic report in response to the list of issues prior to reporting prepared under that procedure (CCPR/C/SLV/QPR/7). It would like to express its appreciation for the opportunity to renew its constructive dialogue with the State party's delegation on the measures taken during the reporting period to implement the provisions of the Covenant. The Committee thanks the State party for the oral responses provided by the delegation and for the additional information provided in writing.

B. Positive aspects

3. The Committee welcomes the legislative and institutional measures taken by the State party during the reporting period in the area of civil and political rights, including:

(a) Judgment No. 44-2013/145-2013 of 13 July 2016 of the Constitutional Chamber of the Supreme Court, declaring the General Amnesty (Consolidation of the Peace) Act to be unconstitutional;

(b) The adoption in 2015 of the Safe El Salvador Plan, whose components include prevention of violence, rehabilitation and support and protection of victims;

(c) The establishment in 2013 of the Programme of Reparations for Victims of Serious Human Rights Violations Committed during the Internal Armed Conflict and in 2017 of the National Commission on the Search for Adults Who Disappeared during the Internal Armed Conflict;

(d) The amendment of article 63 of the Constitution in 2014, granting recognition to indigenous peoples, and the drafting of the National Plan for Indigenous Peoples in 2017;

(e) The amendment of articles 129 and 155 of the Criminal Code in 2015 to incorporate hate crime based on sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression;

* Adopted by the Committee at its 122nd session (12 March–6 April 2018).

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(f) The establishment in 2012 of the National Council for Children and Adolescents;

(g) The National Policy on Trafficking in Persons of 2012 and the Special Act on Trafficking in Persons of 2014;

(h) The Special Comprehensive Act on a Violence-Free Life for Women, articles 45 and 46 of which include the definition of femicide, and the establishment in March 2016 of special courts to ensure that women can lead a life free from violence and discrimination;

(i) Decree No. 754 of August 2017, prohibiting the marriage of persons under the age of 18 years in any circumstances.

4. The Committee also welcomes the State party's ratification of or accession to the following international instruments:

(a) The Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, in 2011;

(b) The Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty, in 2014.

C. Principal areas of concern and recommendations

Implementation of the Covenant and Optional Protocol

5. The Committee notes that the courts, including the Supreme Court, have invoked the Covenant in reviewing domestic legislation. However, the Committee is concerned about reports of a lack of consistency in the invocation of the Covenant by the domestic courts. It is also concerned about reports that civil society was not widely consulted in the preparation of the State party's report, as well as about the inconsistent implementation of the follow-up recommendations in the last reporting cycle. In addition, the Committee is concerned that it has not yet received any communication concerning the State party under the Optional Protocol to the Covenant (arts. 1 and 2).

6. **The State party should take steps to raise awareness of the Covenant and the Optional Protocol, including through awareness campaigns and training for lawyers, judges and prosecutors, and should disseminate them widely. It should also establish an effective national reporting and follow-up mechanism to coordinate the reporting process and the follow-up to and implementation of the concluding observations of the Committee, and to ensure open and broad-based consultations with civil society, including with representatives of indigenous and minority groups, during the process.**

National human rights institution

7. The Committee is concerned that the human and financial resources allocated to the Office of the Human Rights Advocate are not sufficient to enable it to fulfil its mandate effectively and in compliance with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (the Paris Principles). It is also concerned at information received regarding interference with and attacks on this institution, as well as the low rate of implementation of its decisions (art. 2).

8. **The State party should take the necessary measures to ensure that the decisions of the Office of the Human Rights Advocate are implemented by all State institutions and that the Office has sufficient human and financial resources to enable it to carry out its mandate effectively and independently and in full compliance with the Paris Principles. The State party should also protect the Office from any undue interference or external pressure and ensure that its mandate is respected by all government institutions.**

Non-discrimination

9. The Committee is concerned about the absence of a comprehensive anti-discrimination legal framework, as well as the persistence of discrimination against persons

of African descent, indigenous people, migrants, persons with disabilities, women engaged in prostitution, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) persons and persons infected with HIV, especially in the areas of education, health, housing and employment. The Committee is alarmed by the high number of threats, attacks and killings, including by State agents, aimed at LGBTI persons, especially transgender persons, as well as by the high level of impunity for such crimes. The Committee notes that, despite the fact that hate crime based on sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression has now been incorporated in domestic legislation, the relevant provision has not been applied to any cases (arts. 2, 3, 6, 7, 17, 25, 26 and 27).

10. **The State party should:**

(a) **Adopt comprehensive legislation prohibiting discrimination, including direct and indirect discrimination, in all spheres, both in the public and private sectors;**

(b) **Take the necessary steps to guarantee full protection from discrimination, both in law and in practice, against persons of African descent, indigenous communities, migrants, persons with disabilities, LGBTI persons and persons infected with HIV, by, inter alia, increasing the number of training programmes for law enforcement and security personnel and awareness campaigns promoting tolerance and respect for diversity. It should also take steps to ensure the full participation of minority groups, including persons of African descent and indigenous communities, in political life;**

(c) **Adopt and implement effective policies for the protection of LGBTI persons, including through the creation of a specialized unit to investigate hate crimes against them, and ensure full recognition of the legal identity of transgender persons;**

(d) **Ensure that cases of discrimination and violence committed by individuals or State agents are systematically investigated, that those responsible are punished with appropriate penalties and that victims receive full reparation.**

Equality of rights between men and women

11. The Committee is concerned about the growing wage gap between men and women since 2010, as well as by the limited participation of women in political and public life and their underrepresentation in decision-making positions and in public or elected office, including in legislative bodies, the Government, the civil service and political parties (arts. 2, 3, 25 and 26).

12. **The State party should step up its efforts to narrow the wage gap between men and women and to increase the participation of women in political and public life and their representation in the public and private sectors, especially in managerial and senior positions, including through the adoption, where necessary, of temporary special measures that give full effect to the provisions of the Covenant.**

Violence against women

13. The Committee acknowledges the State party's efforts to combat violence against women. However, it remains concerned at the high rates of domestic and sexual violence against women, girls and adolescents, including their sexual exploitation by gangs, as well as the alarming number of femicides every year and the fact that rapes are not usually reported. The Committee is concerned about the low number of prosecutions and convictions for femicide, the result of which is systematic impunity for perpetrators and obstacles to reparation for victims. The Committee regrets that it has received no statistics on the complaints received about the various forms of violence against women, the investigations conducted and their outcome, the sentences imposed and the reparation granted to victims. The Committee is further concerned about the accessibility, particularly for women living in rural areas, of the special courts set up to ensure that women can lead a life free from violence and discrimination, as well as about the investigative capacity of such courts. It is also concerned about the inadequate protection, support, recovery and social reintegration mechanisms for women and girls who are victims of gender-based

violence. The Committee is further concerned about the persistence of patriarchal stereotypes and prejudices regarding the role of women in the family and in society, as well as the fact that conciliation is still an option in cases of family violence (arts. 2, 3, 6, 7, 14, 24 and 26).

14. **The State party should:**

(a) **Step up its efforts to prevent, combat and punish all acts of violence against women, including those perpetrated by gang members, and to ensure that the institutions and programmes involved in this work are provided with adequate human, financial and technical resources;**

(b) **Ensure that all acts of violence are investigated promptly, thoroughly and impartially, that the perpetrators are tried and punished, and that victims receive full reparation;**

(c) **Step up its efforts to ensure that all victims have access to assistance and protection, as well as give effect to the right of women victims of violence to justice, including in rural areas;**

(d) **Ensure that training programmes, including programmes to eliminate gender stereotypes, are provided for the staff of judicial, police and forensic medicine institutions.**

Voluntary termination of pregnancy and reproductive rights

15. While the Committee notes that there are legislative proposals to amend existing legislation and to allow abortion under certain limited circumstances, it is concerned about the total prohibition of voluntary termination of pregnancy in the State party, which compels women and girls to resort to unsafe abortions that seriously endanger their lives and health. The Committee is also concerned about the disproportionate sentences of up to 40 years' imprisonment imposed, on charges of aggravated homicide, not only on women seeking an abortion, but also on women who have suffered a miscarriage. The Committee is concerned at reports of a high suicide rate among pregnant women and at the fact that women treated in public hospitals are being reported by medical or administrative staff for the offence of abortion. The Committee acknowledges the efforts made to improve women's and girls' access to sexual and reproductive health services, as well as the reduction in maternal mortality. However, it remains concerned about the reported persistence of maternal mortality due to unsafe abortions, as well as the high rates of child and teenage pregnancy, and about reports of the inadequate coverage and quality of reproductive health services. It is also concerned at reports that persons with disabilities are being forcibly sterilized (arts. 2, 3, 6, 7, 17, 24 and 26).

16. **The Committee urges the State party to amend its abortion legislation as a matter of urgency in order to guarantee safe, legal and effective access to voluntary termination of pregnancy where the life or health of the pregnant woman or girl is at risk or where carrying the pregnancy to term could cause the pregnant woman or girl substantial harm or suffering, especially in cases where the pregnancy is the result of rape or incest or when it is non-viable. The Committee reiterates its previous recommendation and urges the State party to suspend immediately the criminalization of women for the offence of abortion. The State party should also review all cases of women who have been imprisoned for abortion-related offences, with the aim of ensuring their release, and ensure that these women have access to legal assistance and to due process. It should not apply criminal sanctions to women and girls who undergo abortions or to medical service providers who help them to do so, since such measures compel women and girls to resort to unsafe abortions, and it should ensure that the professional secrecy of medical staff and patient confidentiality are observed. Furthermore, it should ensure unimpeded access to high-quality sexual and reproductive health services nationwide, as well as educate and raise awareness among men, women, adolescents and health service providers. It should also ensure that all procedures are followed to obtain the full and informed consent of persons with disabilities with regard to sterilization. To this end, the State party should offer**

special training to health personnel to better acquaint them with the harmful effects and consequences of forced sterilization.

Right to life and security of person

17. The Committee welcomes recent measures to address the serious human rights violations of the past and notes the creation of a special unit to investigate violations that took place during the armed conflict, the establishment in August 2017 of the National Commission on the Search for Adults Who Disappeared during the Internal Armed Conflict, and the submission to the Legislative Assembly in August 2017 of the law on full reparations for victims of the armed conflict. However, the Committee is concerned about the limited human and financial resources allocated to the special unit, the low number of cases that have been reopened so far and the lack of progress in investigations and prosecutions. The Committee is also concerned at reports of resistance by the Armed Forces to allowing access to the historical archives relating to these serious violations, as well as the intimidation of the Attorney General by the Armed Forces, which led to the granting of precautionary measures by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. While the Committee welcomes the measures taken to search for persons, including children, who disappeared during the armed conflict, it is concerned at the inadequacy of institutional and financial resources and the limited forensic capacity of the National Commission, as well as the slow progress made in locating missing persons and providing full reparation to victims (arts. 2, 6, 7, 9 and 16).

18. **The State party should:**

(a) **Ensure that the special unit has the human, financial and technical resources it needs to carry out investigations into the serious human rights violations that took place during the armed conflict, and guarantee access to all information related to such violations, including the archives of the Armed Forces;**

(b) **Ensure the full protection, personal safety and independence of the Attorney General and his staff, as well as the full implementation of the precautionary measures granted by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, and take the necessary measures to prevent the intimidation of public officials and members of civil society who are investigating these cases;**

(c) **Step up the search for missing persons and provide adequate resources for this purpose, including through the National Commission on the Search for Adults Who Disappeared during the Internal Armed Conflict and the National Commission on the Search for Children Who Disappeared during the Internal Armed Conflict. The Committee encourages the State party to consider ratifying the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance.**

19. The Committee takes note of the National Policy on Justice, Public Security and Civic Harmony for 2014–2019, as well as the Safe El Salvador Plan to combat gang violence. However, it is concerned about the extremely high rate of homicides — although recently this has fallen — and in particular about the widespread gang-related violence. The Committee is also concerned about the manner in which the law banning gangs and other criminal groups, associations and organizations is applied, which results in the stigmatization of adolescents living in marginalized communities, and about its conformity with the Covenant and due process guarantees (arts. 2, 6, 7, 9, 14 and 24).

20. **The State party should step up its efforts to reduce the high levels of violence and to protect victims. It should ensure that the Safe El Salvador Plan, and in particular its preventive and rehabilitative measures, which include education and protection programmes for children and young people who refuse to join gangs, is implemented in its entirety, within the framework of a comprehensive rights-based approach. It should also ensure that the measures taken to combat violence comply with the Covenant and that due process guarantees are observed, without stigmatizing young people and adolescents. The State party should also ensure that all violent crimes and other serious offences are investigated in a prompt, thorough and impartial manner, that those responsible are prosecuted and punished, and that victims receive full reparation.**

Extrajudicial executions, enforced disappearances and torture

21. The Committee is concerned about the increase in the number of people killed by the National Civil Police and the Armed Forces and about reports of arbitrary detention, extrajudicial executions and enforced disappearances, as well as about the "death squads" said to be operating within the police and the Armed Forces. The Committee is also concerned about impunity for these alleged crimes and about reports that a high percentage of these cases are dismissed (arts. 2, 6, 7, 9 and 16).

22. **The State party should strengthen the role of the National Civil Police in the maintenance of law and order and enable it to assume the law and order functions exercised by the Armed Forces. It should ensure that all cases of alleged extrajudicial execution, arbitrary detention and enforced disappearance are investigated in a prompt, thorough and impartial manner, that searches are carried out for missing persons, that the perpetrators are prosecuted and punished, and that victims receive full reparation.**

23. The Committee is concerned about complaints and reports of torture, ill-treatment and excessive use of force by the police, members of the Armed Forces and other public officials (arts. 2, 7 and 10).

24. **The State party should:**

(a) **Ensure that all allegations of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment are investigated in a prompt, thorough and impartial manner, that the perpetrators are prosecuted and, if convicted, punished with appropriate penalties, and that victims receive full reparation;**

(b) **Strengthen the independence and investigative capacity of the Attorney General's Office so that cases of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment are properly investigated and prosecuted, in accordance with the Manual on the Effective Investigation and Documentation of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (the Istanbul Protocol);**

(c) **Ensure that domestic legislation on the use of force and the application thereof are fully in line with international standards, including the Covenant and the Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials; that all training materials are in line with the Covenant and the Basic Principles; and that law enforcement and security officials are trained in these standards and apply them in practice;**

(d) **Consider ratifying the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.**

Prohibition of slavery, forced labour and trafficking in persons

25. While the Committee recognizes the efforts made by the State party to combat trafficking in persons, it is concerned about the persistence of this phenomenon, particularly as it affects women, children and LGBTI persons; the lack of protection and assistance provided to victims; the low number of prosecutions and convictions; and reports on the obstruction of investigations due to corruption in the judicial system. The Committee is also concerned about the prevalence of the worst forms of child labour and reports of labour exploitation and the forced labour of women in the maquiladora industry, as well as in the fishing, agricultural and domestic sectors, especially in the case of women and children (arts. 3, 7, 8 and 24).

26. **The State party should step up its efforts to prevent, combat and punish trafficking in persons and ensure that the measures it takes are implemented effectively. It should ensure that crimes of trafficking in persons are investigated, the perpetrators prosecuted and punished, and victims given access to adequate protection and assistance measures. It should also step up its efforts to prevent, combat and punish the use of child labour, including in its worst forms, and forced labour, particularly in the maquiladora industry and in the fishing, agricultural and domestic sectors. It should ensure that legal protection is in place and that labour law**

is enforced, including by ensuring the provision of appropriate training, effective inspections and the imposition of penalties on employers.

Persons deprived of their liberty and detention conditions

27. The Committee is concerned that the maximum initial period of detention (administrative detention) is 72 hours and that this period can allegedly be extended to six days in practice. It is also concerned about reports of the increased use of administrative detention since the Special Anti-Terrorism Act of 2006 came into effect (art. 9).

28. **The State party should amend the legislation on the initial period of detention (administrative detention) to bring it into line with the Covenant and ensure that it does not exceed 48 hours, that alternatives to detention are considered in each case, and that the total duration of provisional detention is not excessive.**

29. While the Committee takes note of the efforts made by the State party to improve prison facilities and build new ones, it is concerned about the continued high levels of overcrowding in prisons and in the jails of the National Civil Police, and about the cruel and inhuman living conditions in these facilities; the increased number of deaths in detention centres; the large number of persons in provisional detention, who account for more than 30 per cent of the prison population; the failure to separate untried prisoners from convicted prisoners; and the reportedly intrusive and humiliating searches to which lawyers are subjected on entering and leaving detention centres. The Committee is also concerned about reports on the use of special security measures in six prison facilities, including locking up prisoners for 24 hours in a cell, the suspension of family visits and restrictions on visits from lawyers. The Committee regrets that it has not received sufficient information on the situation of persons with psychosocial or intellectual disabilities held in psychiatric centres and other institutions, or on legal remedies to challenge involuntary hospitalization (arts. 6, 7, 9 and 10).

30. **The State party should:**

(a) **Redouble its efforts to improve detention conditions and reduce overcrowding in detention centres, in particular by promoting alternatives to the deprivation of liberty, and ensure that provisional detention is an exceptional, reasonable and necessary measure in all circumstances and that it is as short as possible, including for adolescents in conflict with the law;**

(b) **Undertake a comprehensive review of the special security measures and ensure that detention conditions in all the country's prisons are compatible with the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules), as well as ensure that lawyers can exercise their functions without intimidation or undue interference;**

(c) **Investigate in a prompt and thorough manner all inmate deaths that might be unlawful, prosecute and, where appropriate, punish those responsible, and grant full reparation to victims' families;**

(d) **Ensure that psychiatric confinement is strictly necessary and proportionate, is for the purpose of protecting the individual in question from serious harm or from injuring others, and is applied only as a last resort and for the shortest appropriate period of time;**

(e) **Ensure that procedures for involuntary hospitalization respect the views of the individual concerned, and that any representative genuinely represents and defends the wishes and interests of that individual. In that regard, it should further ensure that such confinement is supported by adequate procedural and substantive safeguards as established by law.**

Migrants, asylum seekers and internally displaced persons

31. The Committee takes note of the existence of a draft law on migration and aliens, which specifies the maximum period for detention at the Centre for the Comprehensive Care of Migrants, as well as of the ongoing reform of the Refugee Status Determination Act.

However, it is concerned that the existing legal framework for the protection of refugees and asylum seekers is not in accordance with international standards. It is also concerned about information regarding the detention of asylum seekers, including families with young children, at the Centre, and about the unsuitability of the Centre for this purpose. The Committee is also concerned about reports regarding the lack of adequate protection and assistance for persons deported to the State party, in particular unaccompanied migrant children, and for unaccompanied migrant children travelling through El Salvador en route for the United States of America (arts. 7, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 24 and 26).

32. **The State party should:**

(a) **Ensure that national immigration legislation, including the Refugee Status Determination Act and the law on migration and aliens, is consistent with the Covenant and other international standards;**

(b) **Avoid placing asylum seekers, especially children, in administrative detention and provide alternatives to detention for adult asylum seekers, so that detention is used only as a last resort and for as short a period as possible;**

(c) **Ensure the provision of protection and assistance to asylum seekers in appropriate conditions, as well as access to basic services and to the national asylum system;**

(d) **Ensure that persons deported to El Salvador and unaccompanied migrant children travelling through El Salvador en route for the United States receive adequate assistance and protection;**

(e) **Ensure the provision of training on the Covenant, on international standards for dealing with asylum seekers and refugees and on human rights for the staff of institutions dealing with migration and border issues.**

33. The Committee is concerned about reports that a large number of persons — in particular women, children, adolescents and LGBTI persons — have been displaced internally as a result of the violence prevailing in the State party, as well as about the absence of official statistics and the lack of assistance and protection for these population groups (arts. 2, 12, 24 and 26).

34. **The State party should step up its efforts to prevent internal displacement. It should also establish a national register of internally displaced persons and a legal framework, policies and programmes aimed at ensuring that assistance and protection are provided to such persons, and in particular women, children, adolescents and LGBTI persons.**

Independence of the judiciary

35. The Committee is concerned that the process for selecting and appointing judges and magistrates advocated by the National Council of the Judiciary may not adequately ensure the independence and competence of the judiciary, or transparency and public scrutiny. The Committee is also concerned that the regime for disciplining judges and magistrates does not comply fully with the Covenant or the Basic Principles on the Independence of the Judiciary (arts. 14 and 26).

36. **The State party should ensure that the process for selecting and appointing judges and magistrates is prescribed by law and ensures their independence, competence and integrity, as well as transparency and public scrutiny. It should also ensure that the regime for disciplining judges and magistrates complies fully with the Covenant and the Basic Principles on the Independence of the Judiciary.**

Freedom of expression, freedom of association, and violence against human rights defenders and journalists

37. The Committee is concerned about acts of violence and intimidation against human rights defenders and journalists, as well as the lack of measures to protect them, particularly those working to defend the rights of women, LGBTI persons and indigenous peoples, as well as reproductive and sexual rights, and those documenting extrajudicial executions or

investigating past crimes. The Committee is also concerned about the implementation of articles 345 and 348 of the Criminal Code, which respectively concern "illegal groups, associations and organizations" and the crime of "public disorder", and article 331 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, which prohibits the application of alternatives to provisional detention for the offence of public disorder, since that prohibition could lead to restrictions on the right to peaceful assembly and freedom of association (arts. 6, 7, 9, 19, 21 and 22).

38. **The State party should ensure the provision of effective assistance and protection to human rights defenders and journalists who are subjected to threats, violence and intimidation, and should ensure that they can carry out their work in appropriate conditions, including by recognizing the right of individuals, organizations and groups to defend human rights, by adopting special legislative measures for their protection, and by effectively implementing precautionary measures. The State party should also ensure that such acts are investigated promptly, thoroughly, independently and impartially, that perpetrators are prosecuted and punished with appropriate penalties, and that victims receive full reparation. It should also take effective measures to protect and safeguard the right of peaceful assembly and freedom of association, including by reviewing its criminal legislation.**

Children's rights and birth certificates

39. The Committee takes note of the prohibition of corporal punishment in the Child and Adolescent Protection Act. The Committee is, however, concerned that article 38 of the Act permits "moderate punishment". The Committee welcomes the prohibition of marriage of persons under the age of 18 under all circumstances. However, it remains concerned about the lack of legal standards governing the minimum age of consent to sexual relations. The Committee is also concerned about obstacles to birth registration, in particular those affecting families living in poverty, including registration fees, fines and the requirement for mothers who have given birth outside a hospital to obtain proof of delivery (arts. 16, 23 and 24).

40. **The State party should take practical steps, including legislative measures, where appropriate, to put an end to corporal punishment in all settings. It should establish legal standards, in conformity with the Covenant, governing the minimum age of consent to sexual relations. It should also redouble its efforts to ensure that all children born in the State party's territory are registered in a systematic manner, including through the removal of obstacles to birth registration and the simplification of the registration process.**

Indigenous peoples

41. The Committee is concerned about the absence of reliable official statistics on the indigenous population in the State party, and about the absence of a national consultation mechanism to facilitate the participation of indigenous peoples in decision-making processes. The Committee is also concerned that existing legislation does not recognize the right of indigenous peoples as such to acquire land titles, and that there is no specific legislation for the granting of land titles to indigenous peoples (arts. 2, 25, 26 and 27).

42. **The State party should redouble its efforts to ensure the promotion and protection of the rights of indigenous peoples, including by keeping reliable official statistics on the indigenous population and by creating a national consultation mechanism to safeguard the exercise of that population's free, prior and informed consent. It should ensure that existing policies and programmes are implemented and that adequate resources are allocated for them. It should also guarantee the right of indigenous peoples to obtain collective land titles, and ensure the adoption of specific legislation for the granting of land titles to indigenous peoples. The Committee encourages the State party to ratify the ILO Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169).**

D. Dissemination and follow-up

43. The State party should widely disseminate the Covenant and its two optional protocols, the State party's seventh periodic report and the present concluding observations, with a view to raising awareness of the rights enshrined in the Covenant among the judicial, legislative and administrative authorities, civil society, the non-governmental organizations operating in the country and the general public, including members of minority communities and indigenous peoples.

44. In accordance with rule 71 (5) of the Committee's rules of procedure, the State party is hereby requested to provide, within two years of the adoption of these concluding observations — in other words, by 6 April 2020 — information on its implementation of the recommendations made by the Committee in paragraphs 16 (voluntary termination of pregnancy), 18 (serious human rights violations that took place during the armed conflict) and 22 (extrajudicial executions and enforced disappearances).

45. The Committee requests the State party to submit its next periodic report by 6 November 2023. Given that the State party has accepted the simplified reporting procedure, the Committee will transmit to it a list of issues prior to the submission of the report in due course. The State party's replies to that list of issues will constitute its eighth periodic report. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 68/268, the word limit for the report is 21,200 words.